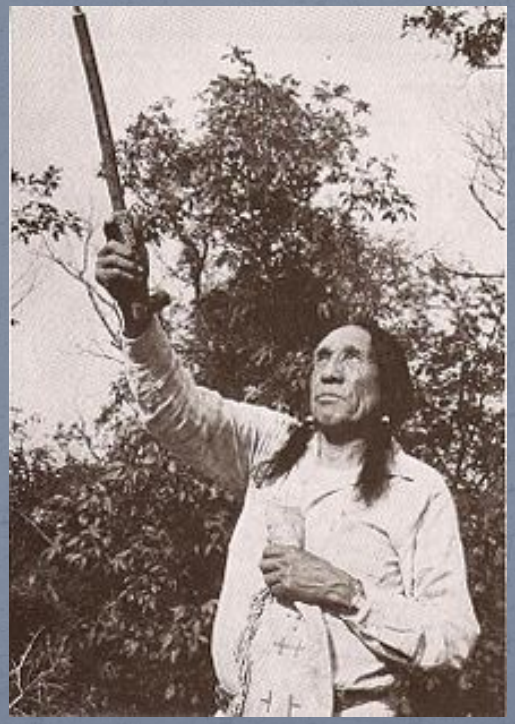
National Native American Heritage Month 2012

Serving Our People, Serving Our Nations: Native Visions for Future Generations

National Native American Heritage Month

“We all come from the same root, but the leaves are all different.”



John Fire Lame Deer

National Native American Heritage Month

National Native American Heritage Month celebrates the heritage and contributions of the first Americans to the history and culture of the United States.

The month of November is designated by Congress

and the president as a time to reflect on the rich

traditions and accomplishments, as well as the

National Native American Heritage Month

Red Fox James
White House (1915)
Photo credit: Harris & Ewing

The first “American Indian Day” was celebrated in May 1916 in New York after Red Fox James, a Blackfeet Indian, rode on horseback from state to state, gathering endorsements from 24 state governments to establish a day to honor American Indians.

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Congress called for a weeklong observance in the mid-1980s. The month-long national recognition of Native Americans began in 1990, when President George H. W. Bush signed a joint congressional resolution designating November 1990 as National American Indian Heritage Month.

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Similar resolutions, under different name variants including “Native American Heritage Month” and "National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month" have been issued each year since 1994.

National Native American Heritage Month

Since then, the title has expanded to celebrate the heritage, history, art, and traditions of Native Americans and Alaska Natives.

National Native American Heritage Month

The term Native American refers to any member of the indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere.

The term Alaska Native refers to Alaska's original inhabitants, including Aleut, Eskimo, and Indian groups.

National Native American Heritage Month

As of the 2010 Census, the nation's population of Native Americans and Alaska Natives was 5.2 million, including those of more than one race. They made up 1.7 percent of the total U.S. population.

Of this total, 2.9 million were Native American and Alaska Native only, and 2.3 million were Native American and Alaska Native in combination with one

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Additionally, the Census reported that the tribal

groupings with 100,000 or more responses for the

Native American and Alaska Native alone-or-in-

any-combination population were Cherokee

(819,105), Navajo (332,129), Choctaw (195,764),

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Native Alaskan tribes belong to five geographic areas, are organized under thirteen Alaska Native Regional Corporations, speak 20 different languages, and have 11 different cultures

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The data showed a significant percentage growth of Native Americans and Alaska Natives. The number of Americans identifying themselves as exclu… American or Alaska native increased 18 percent in the past t… years.

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The projected population of Native American and Alaska Natives, including those of more than one race, on July 1, 2050 is 8.6 million, comprising two percent of the total U.S. population.

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A Native American or Alaska Native person is someone who has a blood degree from and is recognized as such by a federally recognized tribe or village (as an enrolled tribal member) and/or the United State

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Blood lineage is not the only means by which a person is considered to be a Native American or Alaska Native. Other factors, such as a person's knowledge of his or her tribe's culture, history, language, religion, and familial kinships, as well as how strongly a person identifies himself or herself as Native American or Alaska Native, are also important.

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At present, there are 566 federally recognized Native American and Alaska Native tribes and villages and more than 100 state-recognized tribes

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A federally recognized tribe is a Native American or Alaska Native tribal entity that is recognized as having a government-to-government relationship with the United States, including the responsibilities, powers, limitations, and obligations attached to that designation, and is eligible for funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

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Federally recognized tribes are recognized as

possessing certain inherent rights of self

government (i.e., tribal sovereignty) and are

entitled to receiv l benefits,

services, and pro e of their

relationship with

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Sovereignty is the right of a nation or group of people to be self governing. Native

Americans and Alaska Natives are U.S.

citizens and also citizens of their tribes. Like

other Americans, they are subject to federal

laws, but they are not always subject to state

laws.

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Sovereignty is the most fundamental concept that defines the relationship between the government of the United States and governments of Native American tribes.

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Native Tribal governments are the oldest

governments in existence in the Western

Hemisphere. In fact, the Constitution of the

Seven Iroquois Nations, which was called “The Great Law of Peace,” governed an alliance of Native American tribes that was already in place 400 years before the first

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The Native Americans are a revered part of the American culture, yet many of their basic human needs go unmet.

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The percentage of Native Americans and Alaska Natives that were in poverty in 2010 was 28.4 percent. For the United States as a whole, the corresponding rate was 15.3 percent.

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According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the median income of Native American and Alaska Native households was $35,062 in 2010. This is compared with $50,046 for the nation as a whole.

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Compared to other groups, Native American and

Alaska Native youth have more serious problems

with mental health disorders. They have higher rates of anxiety, substance abuse, and depression.

In 2010, suicide was the leading cause of death for Native American and Alaska Native males ages 10 to 14. For Native American and Alaska Native young adults

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Alcohol-use disorders are more common among Native American youths than other racial groups.

In 2010, 8.9 percent of all Na American and Alaska Native youth were struggling with a alcohol-use disorder, compar to 5.8 percent of the general population.

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The Native American and Alaska Native youth population is affected by gang involvement more than any other racial population.

Fifteen percent of Native American and Alaska Native youth are involved with gangs, compared to eight percent of Latino, and six percent of African American youth.

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National Native American Heritage Month celebrates the rich ancestry and myriad contributions of Native Americans and Alaska Natives and acknowledges the struggles they face today. It is a time to rededicate ourselves to supporting tribal sovereignty, self-determination, and prosperity for all Native Americans.

National Native American Heritage Month

...We rededicate ourselves to supporting tribal sovereignty, tribal self-determination, and prosperity for all Native Americans. We will seek to strengthen our nation-to-nation relationship by ensuring tribal nations have a voice in shaping national policies impacting tribal communities. As we confront the challenges currently facing our tribal communities and work to ensure American Indians and Alaska Natives have

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